(b) There were 10530 vacancies in Northeast Frontier Railway as on 31.01.2006 which has come down to 9140 as on 31.10.2006. Arising and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process. Vacancies are filled up mainly through open market recruitment and promotions. All efforts are being taken to fill up the vacancies especially of safety categories.

Connecting Chennai with major cities of country

1904. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to connect Chennai and other major cities of the country with Delhi through high speed trains with the collaboration of Japan;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the projects in this regard are likely to be executed; and

(c) the other steps proposed to be taken by railways to introduce high speed trains for long distance travel in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Private partnership in freight corridor project

†1905. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has raised serious technical points on private participation in the much coveted freight corridor project of Railways;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the said Ministry has stated that it would not be possible to grant approval to the said project without carrying out amendments in industrial regulation law;

(c) if so, efforts being made for sorting out the said problem; and

(d) whether Government wold provide its own resources for

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

implementation of this project in case such amendment is not possible to be made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Appointment on compassionate grounds to dependants of Mumbai blasts

1906. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways have offered appointments on compassionate grounds to the dependents of the victims of serial bomb blasts on Mumbai Suburban railway on the 11th July, 2006;

(b) if so, the number of persons who have approached the Railways for such appointments; and

(c) the number of persons who have been, so far, offered/given appointments of Class IV and Class III and Class II (non-gazetted) and the criteria adopted for such appointments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 101 persons from outside of the Railways and 14 Railway employees have approached for such appointments.

(c) In accordance with the decision of the Ministry of Railways, out of 101 persons outside of the Railways, 66 have been offered appointment in Group 'D' (earlier categorised as Class IV) and of these 66,24 have been appointed in Group "D" categories. Further, the Railway employees died in bomb blast, request from 14 had been received. So far 04 have been offered appointment in Group "C" after adjudging their suitability for appointment on compassionate ground in terms of extant instructions of the Board. 08 cases are minors which can be considered only on attaining age of majority of the ward. One case is under examination and one case is disputed being the case of two wives.